

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1885
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 8399

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PBOR PEPR IN IR PK
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER'S PRESS CONFERENCE

1. SPEAKING TO NEWSMEN SHORTLY AFTER HIS RETURN MAY 29
FROM A TWO-DAY VISIT TO IRAN, FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE
TOUCHED ON THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:

2. AFGHANISTAN. - VAJPAYEE DID NOT VISIT IRAN JUST
TO DISCUSS AFGHANISTAN; HIS TALKS WITH IRANIAN LEADERS
WERE PART OF A CONTINUING PROCESS OF CONSULTATIONS AMONG
NEIGHBORS. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN ARE THE
INTERNAL AFFAIR OF AFGHANISTAN. NEVERTHELESS, HE WAS
QUOTED AS SAYING, THERE ARE APPREHENSIONS ABOUT A SETBACK
TO THE PROCESS OF REGIONAL STABILITY AND COOPERATION.
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INDIA'S VIEW IS THAT THE DEVELOPMENTS
IN AFGHANISTAN NEED NOT BE A SETBACK TO THIS PROCESS.
(HE DECLINED TO NAME THE PERSONS OR COUNTRIES THOUGHT
TO BE NERVOUS OVER EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN.) INDIA AND
IRAN BOTH SEEK STABILITY, COOPERATION, PRESERVATION OF
INDEPENDENCE AND "INTEGRITY" OF ALL STATES IN THE REGION.
THE SHAH DID NOT PUT FORWARD -- AS ASSERTED BY WHAT

VAJPAYEE REPORTEDLY LABELED "TOTALLY BASELESS AND MISCHIEVOUS"
NEWS REPORTS -- A PROPOSAL FOR CLOSE PAK-INDO-
IRANIAN COOPERATION IN CASE THE SOVIET UNION MADE ITS
PRESENCE FELT IN THE REGION THROUGH AFGHANISTAN. VAJPAYEE
BELIEVED IRAN SHARED THE GOI VIEW THAT THE NEW AFGHAN
GOVERNMENT FACES PROBLEMS COMMON TO ALL DEVELOPING
COUNTRIES AND THAT THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF THESE COUNTRIES
CAN BE SOLVED BY COOPERATION AND NOT BY CONFRONTATION.
ASKED FOR THE GOI'S POSITION REGARDING THE DURAND LINE,
VAJPAYEE REPORTEDLY REPLIED THAT EXISTING BOUNDARIES
SHOULD BE RESPECTED AND ANY DIFFERENCES RESOLVED THROUGH
NEGOTIATIONS.

3. INDO-IRANIAN RELATIONS. - INDIA OFFERED TO SELL
WHEAT AND SUGAR TO IRAN, AND, IN RESPONSE TO AN IRANIAN
COMPLAINT, VAJPAYEE PROMISED TO LOOK INTO THE DELAY IN
SHIPPING STEEL BILLETS FROM INDIA TO IRAN. IRAN RESPONDED
POSITIVELY TO THE IDEA OF GREATER ECONOMIC COOPERATION
WITH INDIA, AND PRIME MINISTER DESAI MIGHT SIGN SOME
ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS DURING HIS BRIEF STOPOVER IN TEHRAN
ON JUNE 5. ASKED IF THE SHAH HAD RAISED THE IDEA OF AN
ASIAN COMMON MARKET, VAJPAYEE REPLIED THAT BILATERAL
ECONOMIC RELATIONS SHOULD PRECEDE MULTILATERAL COOPERATION.
RESPONDING TO VAJPAYEE'S QUESTION ABOUT
THE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY INDIAN BUSINESSMEN IN
OBTAINING IRANIAN VISAS, THE IRANIANS ASSURED HIM THAT
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INDIANS WERE NOT DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN THE IRANIAN
GOVERNMENT'S DRIVE TO HALT ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION.

4. OUTSIDE INTERVENTION IN BORDER DISPUTES. - INDIA
AND IRAN THOUGHT THAT BORDER DISPUTES IN AFRICA AND
ELSWHERE SHOULD BE RESOLVED WITHOUT FOREIGN ASSISTANCE.
SINCE THERE IS NO DEARTH OF FREEDOM FIGHTERS IN AFRICA,
INDIA SEES NO NEED TO INVITE FOREIGN FORCES TO PARTICIPATE
IN THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.
ACCEPTING THE LONG-TERM PRESENCE OF FOREIGN TROOPS SHOULD
BE AVOIDED BY COUNTRIES COMMITTED TO NON-ALIGNMENT.
GOHEEN

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